**The Cold War in the 1950s**

**Which Way Does the Wind Blow?: From Brinkmanship to Peaceful Co-Existence to Brinkmanship to Peaceful Coexistence**

* **inconsistent actions & policies of superpowers partially result of new leaders**
* **partially result of the personalities of those new leaders: Krushchev’s opportunism & Dulles’ strong Christian beliefs**
* **overarching desire to manage their antagonism—fear of nuclear devastation**
* **more emphasis on propaganda victories**
* **domestic considerations: Krushchev’s struggle for power in mid-1950s & change in policy after 1956 and McCarthyism in the US during the first half of the 1950s**

**1950: Korean War**

**NSC 68: US reaffirming of Containment but with a different emphasis on**

**method—substantial increase importance on military might, not**

**only economic power**

* **increase of conventional forces**
* **increase in atomic weapons**
* **RESPONSE to Soviet A-bomb & LOSS of atomic monopoly**
* **US had been successful because of its dominance—massive military**

**build-up only way to keep it**

**1951: US & USSR develop H-bomb a.k.a. thermonuclear weapons**

**1953: Dwight D. Eisenhower (Ike) sworn in as President of the United States (POTUS)**

**Stalin Dies**

**Korean War ends**

**East German (GDR) Revolt**

**Soviet Leadership, 1953-1956**

* **collective leadership while struggling for control**
* **Nikita Krushchev, 1894-1971**
* **Georgi Malnkov, 1902-1988**
* **Vyachlav Molotov, 1890-1986**
* **Lavrenty Beria, 1899-1953**
* **Nikolay Bulganin, 1896-1975**
* **Malenkov: “At the present time there is no disputed or unresolved questions that**

**cannot be settled by mutual agreement of the interested countries. This**

**applies to our relations with all states, including the United States of**

**America.” (1953, shortly following Stalin’s death)**

**The Eisenhower Administration, 1953-1961**

* **Ike continued much of Truman’s foreign policy**
* **Containment Policy: remained foundation of US foreign policy**
* **NSC 68 still influencing US policy**
* **building world-wide anti-communist alliance**
* **economic aid still a mainstay of policy**
* **Ike acknowledged integrity of Soviet sphere of influence (did not take active**

**advantage of problems in GDR 1953, Poland 1956 or Hungary 1956)**

* **New Look Policy: increased importance of nuclear arsenal**
* **war w/USSR: nukes weapons of 1st resort, not last resort**
* **decrease in conventional forces to ↓ cost of military**
* **“more bang for the buck”**
* **John Foster Dulles named this policy: massive retaliation**
* **Dulles master of Brinkmanship: threaten the use of nuclear weapons in order**

**to achieve US goals & to coercive communists in diplomacy and**

**negotiations**

* **Ike more willing to use espionage**
* **Ike saw negotiations with USSR & China (PRC) as legitimate part of**

**Containment**

* **first diplomatic contact at high level since 1948**

**Brinkmanship: Two Case Studies**

**1) Taiwan Crisis, 1954-1955; 1958—Quemoy & Matsu Islands**

* **1954: Chiang Kaishek desire to invade Chinese mainland**
* **August: placed large contingent of troops on islands**
* **Chiang talks of ‘holy war’**
* **Zhou Enlai declared Taiwan must be liberated—threat of invasion**
* **Krushchev supported Mao & PRC**
* **artillery attacks on Taiwanese forces on islands**
* **US warnings in support of Chiang**
* **intensified artillery attacks on islands**
* **US Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend use of nuclear weapons against PRC**
* **Eisenhower resisted pressure to do so**
* **November: PRC bomb island of Tachen**
* **December: US & Taiwan agree to mutual defense agreement: US defend Taiwan if invaded; Chiang needed US approval before invade mainland**
* **March 1955: Dulles declared US seriously considering use of nukes**
* **top US Admiral: planning “to destroy Red China’s military potential”**
* **April: PRC announces willingness to negotiate**

**2) Berlin Crisis, 1958-1961**

* **1955: FRG enters NATO**
* **and GDR Flag.jpg USSR & GDR alarmed—military alliance & possible nuclear weapons in FRG**
* **1945-1961: 1/6 population of GDR fled to West via FRG—West Germany more prosperous & more free**
* **GDR needed ↑standard of living—however, needed skilled workers fleeing to West**
* **1958: Soviets successful test of new H-bomb & development of Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs)—Krushchev initiated crisis over Berlin**
* **Krushchev (1958): “Berlin is the testicles of the West… every time I want to make the West scream I squeeze on Berlin.”**
* **Why initiate the crisis:**
* **Krushchev needed to be seen as tough inside USSR—domestic political enemies portrayed him as weak due to peaceful co-existence**
* **GDR must be seen as equal to FRG for communist prestige**
* **stop or delay equip FRG w/ nukes**
* **divide Western powers**
* **10 Nov 1958: Krushchev demanded peace treaty between two Germanies**
* **27 Nov 1958: Krushchev gave an ultimatum demanding demilitarization of West Berlin, withdrawal of western military troops, change its status to free city, and western powers sign peace treaty with 2 Germanies—6 months… then**
* **USSR sign peace treaty w/GDR; recognize GDR authority over East Berlin**
* **GDR would then control western access to West Berlin—force western powers to deal w/GDR recognizing its sovereignty**
* **1958 Adenauer (FRG) announced Hallstein Doctrine: any country other than USSR that recognized GDR would be considered unfriendly act and end diplomatic relations**
* **Ulbricht pushing for more aggressive action to end surge of emigration from GDR**
* **Krushchev walk fine line between threatening military action (including nukes) and not abandoning peaceful co-existence—wanted a summit to illustrate toughness and diplomacy to solve Berlin crisis**
* **more willing to negotiate—US & FRG wanted tougher stance**
* **western powers rejected ultimatum but eventually agreed to summit meeting**
* **May 1959-May 1960 several summits but no agreements**
* **Krushcheb alternated between brinkmanship & détente**
* **May 1960: US U-2 (Gary Francis Powers) spy plane shot down over USSR—Ike denied US flying spy missions over USSR**
* **Krushchev produced evidence of wreckage and Powers—used incident as excuse to cancel talks until after 1960 US elections & new administration in 1961**
* **Ulbricht continue to press Krushchev to sign separate treaty 1960-1961—accused him of using GDR as pawn in negotiations**
* **John F. Kennedy (JFK), new US president, refused concessions w/USSR same as Ike—built up US forces in Europe, but also talked of opening negotiations on Germany & indicated more interested in free access only to West Berlin not all of Berlin**
* **↑unrest in & exodus from GDR precipitating crisis—okay from Krushchev to act**
* **night of 12-13 Aug 1961: Ulbricht’s order to construct wall (his plans since 1953) began to become reality**
* **long-run stabilized tense situation in Berlin & West**
* **reduced likelihood of war**
* **no further need to try to force western troops out of West Berlin—completely isolated & no longer a refuge for those escaping GDR**
* **Krushchev called the wall “a hateful thing”… “[w]hat should I have done? More than 30,000 people, in fact the best and most qualified from the GDR, left the country in July… [T]he East German economy would have collapsed if we hadn’t done something soon against the mass flight… So the Wall was the only remaining option.”**
* **Kennedy: “It’s not a nice solution, but a wall is a hell of a lot better than a wall.”**
* **Kennedy (July 1963 speech at the Berlin Wall): “we have never had to put up a wall to keep our people in, to prevent them from leaving us”… the wall was “the most obvious and vivid demonstration of the failures of the Communist system, for all the world to see.”**